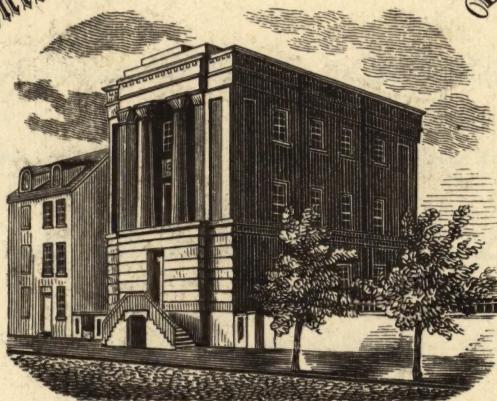


Plethisis Pulmonalis

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

of the

Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania.



FOR

The Degree of Doctor of Medicine

BY

Wm. Cornell Chambery.

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Phthisis Pulmonalis.

As this form of Consumption has engaged the attention of medical men for centuries, and exhausted all the resources of the profession to effect a cure—it is, perhaps, not expected that a medical student in writing his Thesis—one of the conditions by which he claims an examination for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine, should after the failure to ascertain the true cause of Phthisis, by such men as Carl Rokitansky, Laennec, Can de Kolp, Rainey, Bennett, and a host of others, of equal celebrity, contribute any hypothesis worthy of special con-

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sideration. But, their failure should, I think, neither debar nor discourage others — Therefore, I have no apology to offer to those to whom I am about to submit this paper.

I am well aware if I fail to account for the deposit of tubercular matter upon Physiological principles, others, old as teachers and writers, have done the same. However, if I fail in the estimation of those who are competent to judge, I do not claim the failure of others as an excuse. I believe that man has been endowed by the Great Creator with intellect, which, by systematic culture is capable to comprehend

and explored by intricate secret of nature.
Therefore, I shall from the valuable physi-
-ologic-pathological facts clearly established
by some of the above named authorities, hy-
-pothesize, at least, one and, perhaps the
principal predisposing cause of Phthisis
Pulmonalis.

In entering upon the subject, I wish to
say - merely to explain what might possibly
be regarded as an omission on my part, that
is, that my only purpose in this paper is to
direct attention to the cause rather than the
phenomena of the disease, or mode of treat-
ment. Also, that I do not believe in
causes hereditary although they are admitted

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by most, if not all medical writers. It may appear like arrogance in me to advance an opinion which contravenes an old dictum of the profession; but, I ask to be allowed to enjoy a difference of opinion when the facts in the case seem to justify it without incurring the censure of my teachers.

If I understand the term, it means that there is some latent poison in the system or dyscrasia transmitted by parent to child. This has not been demonstrated by any of the ancient or modern methods of investigation. To take for granted what we know to be merely conjectural and what seems to

necessitate the conclusion — that the human mind and eye cannot, even by the aid of science, penetrate further into the normal and abnormal conditions of the body — pre-
-vents investigation and stifles the human intellect.

Moreover, this condition, called by medical writers Pathisical, is really nothing more than an ~~enervation~~ of the whole structure — hence, its great liability to be seriously acted upon by any disturbing course. This position I shall perhaps, be able, at least by implication, to render more conspicuous hereafter.

Rokitansky has assumed from his post-

mortem examinations and analysis that
tubercular consumption depends upon
Hyper-Fibrination of the Blood. It is
not my intention here to deal with
the arguments in favor of this view which
must be derived from Chemical and Mi-
croscopical sources nor merely to consider
how far this excess of pseudo-fibrin in the
blood accounts for the phenomena of con-
sumption, nor to compare the simple excess
of fibrin in the blood as augmented by local
inflammation and rheumatism. There
is an increase also of Fibrin in the blood du-
ring pregnancy, but it is not attended with any
change in quality as in the other diseases such

tioned. But to explain physiologically the process and origin of Rokitansky's tubular element. There are, it is assumed, two physiological processes constantly going on in the animal body - ~~vita et mortua~~. The former is the process by which the fluid matters admitted into the cellulo-vascular structure are altered or assimilated and added to that structure, and the latter is that process by which "^{the parts worn out}" are collected by the venous and lymphatic vessels, to be conveyed to excretory organs in order to be expelled from the body.

First - The parts concerned in these productive processes:- The alimentary

canal is a musculo-membranous tube about thirty feet in length and lined throughout its whole extent by mucous membrane. It differs in structure, function and name in various parts of its course from the mouth to the anus.

The mouth, pharynx, oesophagus and stomach will require no anatomical description - but, the small intestine - the seat of functional abuse will demand a minute description in order to show that I have deduced from physiological and microscopical investigations, at least one, if not the principal cause of consumption which is the direct and unavoidable result

of "Impaired Nutrition".

The small intestine is divided, for the convenience of description, into Duodenum, Jejunum and Ileum. The structure of the wall of the small intestine is composed of four coats - serous, muscular, fibro-areolar and mucous.

I shall not describe the serous, muscular and fibro-areolar coats, nor the following appendages of the mucus membrane, - simple follicles, duodenal, solitary and aggregated glands, as they are not concerned in the process to which I wish to direct attention.

The mucous membrane is a thick and highly vascular membrane covered

by villi. The villi, according to Bowman
are minute conical processes of the mu-
cosous membrane of the small intestine,
to which they are exclusively confined;
they project from the free surface of the
mucous membrane into the cavity of the
intestine, covered by columnar epith-
elium, and seem admirably adapted,
by their conformation, to become im-plant-
ed, like so many little roots, in any fluid
or semi-fluid material which may fill
the bowel. They are numerous - num-
bering from fifty to seventy to the square
inch, - and give to the surface of the mucous
membrane an appearance like that pro-

duced by the pile of velvet. Each villus consists of a network of blood vessels and lacteals with granular corpuscles and fat globules in their interstices, inclosed in a thin prolongation from the mucous surface which forms their basement membrane. The office or function of the villi is the absorption of chyle. This process may be arrested and the chyle fixed in the lacteals by coagulation, if the bowel be suddenly filled with any alcoholic drink. This is no mere ~~ipse dicitur~~ it has been demonstrated. Hence, the fact of the coagulation by alcohol, of

chyle in the lacteal of the villi of the small intestine, is of the utmost importance in a practical point of view. Since it is well known, and, I believe generally admitted by all physiological writers, that the waste of the muscular fibre is greatly accelerated by any circumstance which cuts off the normal supply of the reparative material; — Consequently, the increase in the quantity of the basis substance of the muscular tissue, — Fibrin, — in the blood, — owing to the arrest, by coagulation in the villi of the reparative material, is of a better quality than that which results

from the normal waste of the tissues.

This variety of fibrin - the result of muscular degeneration caused by the arrest in the lacteal system of the nutritive material by Alcohol, as I have already shown - is called pseudo-fibrin in contradistinction to true fibrin.

The former, effete material requires elimination, whilst the latter is used to build up the muscular structure; but, as the process by which true fibrin ^{is} made has been stopped by the injudicious use of Alcoholic drinks during the process of the absorption of Chyle - pseudo-fibrin - augmented in quantity - backing

an outlet, but finding that there is no organ provided, whose function it is to convert fibrin into its peculiar secre-
tions becomes entangled in the paren-
chyma of the lungs and as a consequence
of this insidious deposit, Phthisis results.

Having now shown, as far as the circumscribed space would allow, according to Physiological principles, clearly, and I think conclusively, the principal cause of the origin of Rokitansky's fibrinous excess - the conclusion is that Alcohol, coagulating the Chyle is the principal cause of Phthisis Pulmonalis.

W. Cornell Chambers.